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ABSTRACT

The fact sheet discusses the educator's role in helping students develop an appreciation for global issues affecting their lives and an understanding of the interrelationships binding our society to world regions and peoples. The first section makes a distinction between global education and international or cross-cultural studies. Possible topics for teaching units on global studies as well as educational objectives are presented. It is stressed that a schoolwide program is not likely to be successful unless it has the active support of the district and community. Global education is considered to be equally relevant for students of all academic, social, and economic levels. The second section lists 19 regional, national, and international global education oriented organizations which offer free brochures or catalogs. Eight books and articles published between 1977 and 1980 are listed. In addition to bibliographical information and the annotation, ERIC accession numbers are provided for these items. (LH)

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TEACHING ABOUT GLOBAL ISSUES

ERIC FACT SHEET NO. 4

Sep 81

ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education

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FACT SHEET NO. 4
September 1981

Teaching About Global Issues

Preparing students to live effectively and responsibly in their communities, their nation, and the world is a critically important function of social education. This task becomes more difficult each year, as new developments in science and technology yield an ever-expanding profusion of data and problems at the same time that new developments in communication and transportation are causing the world to "shrink."

Today's students will live most of their lives in the 21st century, in an increasingly interdependent world. The very survival of "Spaceship Earth," and certainly the quality of life experienced by its inhabitants, will depend on the extent to which our young people develop the ability to think, feel, and act from a perspective that is global rather than narrowly personal, national, or regional.

Teachers can play an important role in instilling such a perspective by helping students develop an appreciation for the global nature of most of the issues that affect their lives and an understanding of the interrelationships that bind us inextricably to other regions and peoples.

What is global education? How is it different from international or cross-cultural studies?

Transmitting information about other countries, regions, and peoples has long been a part of social studies, but until fairly recently the emphasis has been on the "otherness" of the country or culture under study. Education for a global perspective stresses the commonalities, rather than the differences, of peoples around the globe — all of whom have the same basic needs and face the same "megaproblems." True global education deals with the interdependence of and interrelationships between all peoples of all countries and regions. This subject matter is usually approached by exploring the ways in which a single issue — for example, air quality — is affected by and in turn affects the lives of peoples from a variety of cultures and regions.

What are these "global issues"?

Although they overlap to a certain extent and may be grouped in various ways, the following issues transcend national boundaries and can be said to affect, directly or indirectly, everyone in the world: human rights, peace and conflict, world trade and economic interdependence, the arms race and the threat of nuclear war, economic development, foreign aid, energy, natural resources, air quality, water quality, population, food and world hunger, transportation and communication systems, disease prevention and medical care, developments in science and technology, fishing rights and maritime law, international law and justice procedures, and the ecological balance of the planet and the biosphere. Specific cases from one or more of these broad categories form the content of many global studies lessons or teaching units.

What are the objectives of global education?

Because the idea of global perspectives in education is relatively new, lists of program and learning objectives are constantly being formulated and redefined. The following objectives for "world-centered schools" are suggested in *Schooling for a Global Age*, edited by James M. Becker (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979):

— To provide learning experiences that give students the ability to view the world as a planetwide society.

— To teach skills and attitudes that will enable people to learn, in and out of school, throughout their lives.

— To avoid ethnocentrism, or drawing sharp divisions between the United States and the rest of the world.

— To integrate world studies with other disciplines and subject fields.

— To teach the interrelatedness of human beings rather than simply identifying uniqueness or differences.

— To explore alternatives for the future.

— To recognize, in providing experiences to students, the likelihood of continuing change, conflict, and ambiguity and of increasing interdependence.

At what grade level should global education be introduced?

Most educators agree that children should be introduced to global perspectives as early as possible — certainly before the onset of puberty, when ethnocentrism and stereotypical thinking tend to increase dramatically. In terms of attitudinal development, middle childhood — approximately age 10 — is probably the optimal time for global learning to take place. While global content can and should be infused, to some extent, into the primary-grade curricula, the global learning of younger children is limited by their ability to grasp the concepts of time and space and by the scarcity of classroom materials designed for preschool and early-elementary grade levels. In many children, the ability to "take" the perspectives and roles of others does not begin to develop markedly until about the age of 7.

Isn't global education a "frill" that is appropriate only for students in relatively "elite" schools and districts?

Definitely not. In theory, acquiring a global perspective is equally relevant, appropriate — and necessary — for students of all academic, social, and economic levels. In practice, a survey of elementary-level global education programs which was conducted by Donald N. Morris (reported in *Schooling for a Global Age*) found that schoolwide commitments to world-centered curricula existed, not only in affluent suburban districts, but also in rural areas in the deep South and inner-city schools in New York City and Chicago. The term "schoolwide commitment" reflects a key factor in the success of global education, wherever it might take place: rather than being confined to the social studies classroom, global perspectives should permeate the curriculum. Furthermore, even if the entire faculty of a school is committed to a world-centered approach to teaching and learning, it is not likely that a schoolwide program will be successful unless it has the support — and, ideally, the active involvement — of the district and community.

Where can educators find assistance for teaching about global issues?

Many of the regional, national and international organizations that focus on education or on one or more global issues offer resources and services that can be useful in teaching about such issues. The available materials range from actual student activities and readings to background information that can be used by teachers to enhance their own knowledge or to construct their own units of study. The services offered include resource collections, teacher-training workshops, and consulting services to schools and school districts. Some organizations that can provide assistance to teachers who want to deal with global issues are listed below, along with very brief general descriptions of the types of resources they offer. For detailed information, please contact the individual organizations; all offer free brochures or catalogs describing their materials and services.

— Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 225 N. Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314 (703/549-9110). Resources for teachers and supervisors.

— Center for Conflict Resolution, 731 State St., Madison, WI 53703 (608/255-0479). Bibliographies of resources on peace and conflict (free), newsletter, workshops for teachers.

— Center for International Programs and Comparative Studies, Cultural Education Center, New York State Education Department, Albany, NY 12230 (518/474-5801). Services and materials for teachers, especially in (but not limited to) New York State.

— Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, 5229 Cass Ave., Detroit, MI 48202 (313/577-3453 or 577-3468). Resources for teachers, publications for children on human rights.

— Center for Teaching International Relations, Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208 (303/753-3106). Resources for teachers, classroom materials.

— ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, 855 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80302 (303/492-8434). Reference sheets (free), computer searches of the ERIC system and other data bases.

—Foreign Policy Association, 205 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10016 (212/481-8454). Background resources for teachers and older students.

— Global Development Studies Institute, P.O. Box 522, 14 Main St., Madison, NJ 07940. Newsletter, curriculum guides for high school and college courses.

— Global Education Associates, 522 Park Ave., East Orange, NJ 07017 (201/675-1409). Workshops for teachers, publications.

— Global Learning, 40 S. Fullerton Ave., Montclair, NJ 07042 (201/783-7616). Teacher-training workshops, resource library.

— Global Perspectives in Education, 218 E. 18th St., New York, NY 10003 (212/475-0850). Resources for teachers, directory of organizational resources, school services program, classroom activities, other publications.

— Institute for World Order, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017 (212/575-5840). Directory of organizational resources and materials for teaching about peace and conflict resolution (free), curriculum guide for upper-secondary and college-level programs, other publications.

— Overseas Development Council, 1717 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Suite 501, Washington, DC 20036 (202/234-8701). Background resources for teachers and older students.

— Population Reference Bureau, 1337 Connecticut Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20036 (202/785-4664). Background materials for teaching about population and world resources.

— Social Science Education Consortium, 855 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80302 (303/492-8154). Resources for students and teachers, reviews of new curriculum materials.

— Social Studies School Service, 10,000 Culver Blvd., P.O. Box 802, Culver City, CA 90230 (213/839-2436). Print and nonprint materials for students and teachers. (This commercial book jobber distributes materials developed by a wide variety of publishers and organizations.)

— United Nations Association of the U.S.A., 300 E. 42nd St., New York, NY 10017 (212/697-3232). School service program, bibliographies, newsletter, workshops and materials for teachers.

— U.S. Committee for UNICEF, 331 E. 38th St., New York, NY 10016 (212/686-5522). School service programs, workshops and resources for teachers, classroom activity kits.

— World Future Society, 4916 St. Elmo Ave., Washington, DC 20014 (301/656-8274). Workshops for teachers, publications, book service.

What resources are available in the ERIC system?

Many excellent resources for teaching about global issues at all levels have been entered into the ERIC system. Duplicate printouts of the results of computer searches for such materials can be ordered from the Social Science Education Consortium, sponsoring organization for ERIC/ChESS, for $10.00 each. (Write to SSEC Publications, 855 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80302; enclose prepayment or institutional purchase order and indicate whether you want "Global Approach 1-6" or "Global Approach 7-12." There is considerable duplication of entries in the two searches.) The following resources are just a few examples of the items yielded by these searches.

— EJ 241 282. "Viewpoints in Global Education," by Donald C. Wilson and Walter Werner. *Social Studies* 71, no. 6 (November/December 1980). Examines two viewpoints that secondary students can adopt when studying world people and issues.

— EJ 234 130. "Changes in World Emphasize Crucial Role of Schools," by Charles W. Bray III. *NASSP Bulletin* 64, no. 439 (November 1980). Outlines steps that some schools have taken to help their students understand interdependence. (This issue of the *NASSP Bulletin* also contains several other articles on global perspectives in education.)

— EJ 222 575. "Global Perspectives in Education: Questions People Ask," by David C. King. *Intercom* 96/97 (February 1980). Discusses 20 questions commonly asked when educators express a need for a global approach in education. (This journal, published by Global Perspectives in Education, contains many practical and useful resources for global education.)

— EJ 152 306. "Global Education in Elementary Schools: Teacher Education," by John J. Cogan. *Social Education* 41, no. 1 (January 1977). Focuses on inservice and preservice teacher education programs that foster the development of global-minded teachers. (This issue of *Social Education* contains several other articles on using a global approach in elementary schools.)

— ED 188 977. *The Person and the Planet: A Problems Course*, by Florence Widutis. New York: Planetary Citizens, 1980. Provides a curriculum guide and lesson plans for a five-unit, one-semester course appropriate for upper-level high-school students or college freshmen and sophomores.

— ED 183 456. *Global Studies for American Schools*, by Howard D. Mehlinger et al. Washington, DC: National Education Association, 1980. Provides a rationale, model lessons, evaluation suggestions, and other resources for presenting global education programs.

— ED 179 436. *Global Issues: Activities and Resources for the High School Teacher*, by Kenneth A. Switzer and Paul T. Mulloy. Boulder, Colo.: Social Science Education Consortium, ERIC/Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, and Center for Teaching International Relations, 1979. Contains background, lesson plans, and student materials for seven units on contemporary global concerns, in addition to extensive bibliographies of other useful materials.

— ED 166 126. *Schooling for a Global Age*, edited by James M. Becker. Dayton, Ohio: Institute for Development of Educational Activities, 1979 (published by McGraw-Hill Book Co.). A comprehensive guide to objectives, needs, practices, and resources in global education.